
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 70

AN ACT RESTORING BENEFITS TO VETERANS DISCHARGED UNDER "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL".

SUMMARY:

This bill makes veterans eligible for state benefits if:

1. the benefits were previously denied or would be denied due to the veteran's ineligibility for federal benefits;
2. the veteran was denied federal benefits based solely on his or her sexual orientation pursuant to a federal policy prohibiting homosexuals from serving in the armed forces; and
3. the veteran's eligibility for federal benefits has been reinstated.

The bill also requires, to the extent practicable, the Department of Veterans' Affairs to inform veterans of legal services organizations that will help them get military discharge upgrades and reinstated federal benefits. The department should (1) post information on its website, with links to the organizations' websites, (2) distribute the organizations' pamphlets at department offices and facilities and to local veterans' advisory committees. These committees are established by municipalities to coordinate local, state, and federal programs for veterans, including reemployment services, education, vocational training, rehabilitation services, and the provision of veterans' benefits.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2013

DEFINITION OF "VETERAN"

The bill defines "veteran" as any person discharged or released from active duty in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Air Force, or any reserve component thereof, including the Connecticut National Guard, regardless of their discharge

classification.

BACKGROUND

Don't Ask, Don't Tell

From December 21, 1993 until September 20, 2011, the United States prohibited openly homosexual persons from serving in the U.S. armed forces, under a policy called "Don't Ask, Don't Tell", and discharged those who violated the policy less than honorably.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Veterans' Affairs Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 12 Nay 2 (03/12/2013)